

**SY 16-17 Title I Distinguished School Awards**

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is pleased to announce two Title I Distinguished School awards. Thomas Jefferson Elementary in Valparaiso Community Schools is honored as a National Title I Distinguished School for Exceptional Student Performance for a Title I school from SY 2016-2017. Fairmont Elementary School in New Albany-Floyd County Consolidated Schools is honored as a National Title I Distinguished School for Closing the Achievement Gap from SY 2016-2017.

The National Title I Association has been selecting examples of superior Title I school programs for national recognition through the National Title I Distinguished Schools program since 1996. These schools demonstrate a wide array of strengths, including team approaches to teaching and learning, focused professional development opportunities for staff, individualized programs for student success and strong partnerships between the school, parents and the community. What makes National Title I Distinguished Schools’ stories especially powerful are the documented student achievement gains that have resulted from their innovations.

- Selected schools must qualify for one of the following categories:
- Category 1: Exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years
- Category 2: Closing the achievement gap between student groups
- Category 3: Excellence in Serving Special Populations of Students (e.g. homeless, students with disabilities, English learners etc).

**Round 1: Eligible schools were identified based on a review of the following criteria:**

<b><u>Exceptional Performance Category</u></b>	<b><u>Closing the Achievement Gap Category</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Student Achievement Data and School Letter Grade of an A (2015-2016, 2016-2017)</li><li>● Subgroup performance and/or growth (e.g. students with disabilities)</li><li>● Title I Schoolwide served school</li><li>● Poverty data of 35% or higher</li><li>● Diversity of student population</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Student Achievement Data and School Letter Grade of A or B (2015-2016, 2016-2017)</li><li>● Subgroup performance and/or growth (e.g. students with disabilities)</li><li>● Title I Schoolwide served school</li><li>● Poverty data of 35% or higher</li><li>● Diversity of student population</li></ul>

**Round 2: Schools identified in Round 1 completed the following process:**

- School principals and leadership teams participated in a 30 minute, in-depth phone interview with IDOE that included identification of what programs and services led to the school’s growth and achievement; monitoring of student progress; focus for professional development; implementation of professional development activities with fidelity; opportunities for collaboration; and family and community engagement.
- The school and district led a 1 hr. onsite visit with an IDOE team

**Exceptional Student Performance Winner:**

**Thomas Jefferson Elementary in Valparaiso Community Schools**

- Principal: Mr. David Muniz, 219-531-3130
- Title I Program Administrator: Jill Higgins, 219-531-3060
- Superintendent: Dr. E. Ric Frataccia, 219-531-3000
- Thomas Jefferson Elementary School continues to demonstrate high levels of student achievement by creating a culture of high expectations. The diverse school has maintained an 'A' for the past two consecutive years with a school poverty level of 50%. Thomas Jefferson Elementary supports their students through several programs and processes that have remained consistent throughout the past several years. Students receive social and emotional support from the full time social worker and numerous community partnerships. The school supports teachers with their professional development opportunities provided to staff from their technology coach and other district personnel. The principal ensures the environment is focus upon loving kids, working hard, and being a team player. Numerous parent volunteers and paraprofessionals provide additional support to at-risk students. The staff have chosen to rise above the interruptions due to the constant school construction by focusing on the same theme of building up their students. Rigorous and student-centered instructions that aligns to student interests were present throughout the school. Staff exhibited a culture of shared responsibility so that all children of various backgrounds have the opportunity to succeed.

**Growth and Closing the Achievement Gap Winner:**

**Fairmont Elementary in New Albany Floyd County Consolidated Schools**

- Principal: Mrs. Susan Gahan, 812-949-4286
- Title I Program Administrator: Tony Duffy, 812-542-2142
- Superintendent: Dr. Bradley J. Snyder, 812-542-2102
- As a high poverty school of 80%, Fairmont has shown high performance with their student achievement while closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. Fairmont earned an A in 2016-2017 and a B in 2015-2016. Fairmont staff attribute their success to becoming a true "professional learning community" where collaboration toward a singular focus on what is best for students takes center stage at all times. Staff revisit their daily mission and filter decisions through the lens of that mission. The principal describes the first step of this process as a complete cultural rebuild. The school and classroom environment is designed intentionally for elementary students to create a positive, safe, and exciting place to learn. Students from families in need are sent home each week with a backpack full of food. Several community agencies support the school, including its spectacular spring musical production. Students and staff show much enthusiasm and pride in their efforts.